2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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647 many countries are carried out by village or municipal authorities,
[364] are in Malta centrally administered from Valletta.

Gozo provides in some respects an exception to this picture. Though Gozo is administratively and economically dependent upon Malta, it has had for many years a certain measure of autonomy under a separate Commissioner. This appointment is dictated by the island's distance from Valletta in time and space. This isolation has not surprisingly resulted in a widely held belief that the Maltese administration, in which, incidentally, a large number of Gozitans have always held important posts, has systematically
[653] neglected Gozo. That there is a certain justification for this belief can be seen by anyone who compares the condition of the roads and the extension of street lighting, water and drainage in the two islands.

623 Partly to still for ever complaints about neglect, and partly as an experiment with a concept of local government new to Malta,
653 the Gozo Civic Council was established in the summer of 1961. Each village in Gozo now has an elected committee of six councillors, one of whom represents the village on the Civic Council. The Council has the responsibility for the maintenance of roads, government buildings, cemeteries and public gardens, village dispensaries and the museum and public library. It can also construct new roads and extend drainage, water and street lighting. To
[651] finance its work the Council receives the revenue from local taxes and from certain government property in Gozo. It also has the power to levy rates, but as all councillors made solemn promises to their constituents that they would not do so, this additional source of revenue must be discounted for the time being.

II

793 The Maltese Islands form a single province of the Catholic Church. This province is divided into the Archdiocese of Malta
795 and the Diocese of Gozo, which includes the small island of Comino. The Bishop of Gozo is suffragan to the Archbishop of Malta. As the senior or Metropolitan Bishop, the Archbishop has
[293] certain privileges and rights over his suffragan. These include the right to visit his suffragan's diocese (with Papal authority), should the latter neglect to do so; the right to appoint a temporary vicar on the decease of the Bishop of Gozo, if the Cathedral Chapter of

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the latter's diocese fails to appoint one within eight days; and the right to wear the insignia of his office which mark his superior dignity (the *pallium* and the double cross), throughout his province. Moreover, the Archbishop's court functions as a court of appeal for cases heard in the court of the Bishop of Gozo. In all other matters, however, the Bishop of Gozo has the same rights as the Archbishop. These include the right to make certain rules and dispensations for his diocese, to inflict penalties, interdictions and excommunication; and to determine who may be admitted to the priesthood.[1]

Each Bishop is assisted by a number of advisers, who also run the Curia, or administrative headquarters of the diocese. In the Archdiocese of Malta the Curia is under the charge of the Vicar General, who has the title of Titular Bishop. These advisers are for the most part Monsignori, or Canons, of the Cathedral Chapter. The Cathedral Chapter is composed of the priests attached to a cathedral church who advise the Bishop, arrange for a more solemn celebration of divine worship, and, when the See is vacant, provide for the government of the diocese. Though the Archdiocese of Malta has both a Cathedral in Mdina, and a Co-Cathedral in Valletta, there is only one Chapter.

In addition to the Cathedral Chapters in Malta and Gozo, there are also a number of Collegiate churches. The clergy of a Collegiate Church form a Collegiate Chapter, and have the title of Canons. They perform no special duties in the diocese. The title of 'Collegiate' is an honour which can only be bestowed upon a church with Papal sanction. There are Collegiate Chapters in Senglea, Vittoriosa, Cospicua, Rabat, Birkirkara and Valletta in Malta, and in Għarb, Nadur and Xagħra in Gozo.

The Archdiocese of Malta and the Diocese of Gozo are divided into 48 and 15 parishes respectively. A parish is the basic social and territorial unit of the Church. Every village in Malta and Gozo is a separate parish, though some towns are divided into two or more parishes. The limits of a parish are fixed by the Bishop. They often extend several miles beyond the compact villages that are so characteristic of the Maltese countryside. In most rural parishes there are also a few scattered farmsteads. The occupants of these isolated farms normally have houses in the village, to which they

[1] Cf. William E. Addis and others, 'Archbishop', *A Catholic Dictionary* (16th ed. rev.; London, Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1960), pp. 44 f.

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III

A previous chapter set out the hierarchical organization of the Church. It was observed that rank was determined by seniority in combination with certain marks of honour conferred by ecclesiastical authorities in recognition of merit. Besides rank, these honours often bestow the right to certain external signs, which are much prized. The many religious processions and ceremonies provide occasions on which parishes can display their symbols of rank to outsiders. For example, the Canons of a Collegiate church wear distinctive ceremonial robes, and are permitted to carry a huge silver mace in processions as a sign of their church's rank. They add a great deal of colour and pageantry to the religious processions in which they are invited to participate. An old man once described Collegiate churches to me as 'the ornament of all other parish churches', and added, 'where there are no Canons, there is nothing in a procession.' The clergy of a church which has received the title of Basilica may carry in procession a huge red and gold damask umbrella. They are also permitted to carry a bell, to wear gold buckles on their shoes and, on certain occasions, to say Mass facing the congregation. As with the title Collegiate, the title Basilica can only be bestowed upon a church by Papal sanction. In Malta it has been given only to the Collegiate churches of Senglea and Birkirkara, to the churches of Mt. Carmel and St. Dominic in Valletta, and in Gozo to that of St. George in Rabat.

The bestowal of honours is not in fact determined by merit alone. In view of their importance as symbols of excellence, they become counters in the competition between parishes and between parish associations. Their acquisition is thus a matter of great concern to the entire community, and often becomes the subject of political action. That is, persons and groups try to influence those who make the decisions in relation to their bestowal. Through their network of personal relations, leading village figures, including the priests, try to influence the Bishop and the monsignori who surround him. They also bargain with these authorities, and if an unfavourable decision is handed down, they may resort to an open show of disrespect towards the Bishop – by smashing his coat of arms, for example – to signal their dissatisfaction and so attempt to force him to reconsider their